857 462 231 /44 cont./ an activity he should practice from an early age as he is obliged to find all animals that wander away; to make bows and arrows and stalk animals when hunting. On his own part, with his small friends he organizes hunts for machorros (2) and various

857 462 224

2. Edible lizard.

kinds of birds and makes traps in the wells for pigeons. He helps catch the seasonal birds which arrive at harvest time, keeps watch during the night on traps set for deer, learns to slaughter the animals required for household consumption and to make the best use of them.

857 462 241 In agricultural work he helps in the task of clearing his maternal uncle's land of trees, and later looks after his own piece if he has such, clearing it and leaving it ready for the women to sow the seed; he also plants fruit trees and creepers and attends to weeding. Harvesting work is done by the women. In places where fishing is practiced, he takes part, when he is about ten years old, in related activities, such as opening to extract pearls. He also takes part in making farm tools, sacks, harnesses, hats, coconut-husk necklaces, etc., when his elders are employed in these activities.

857 462 415 To the boy falls the preparation of gourd vessels, basins, cups, plates, etc., used for different domestic purposes. The job of preparing the gourd dishes includes all the processes from picking the fruit when /45/ ripe, opening it and taking out the pith, and, when the rind is still tender, incising decorative [531] designs on it with a metal knife or the sharp point of a bone or stone. These designs are usually of his own personal invention.

857 462 Lastly, he may be given odd jobs to do such as the delivering of a message, the fetching of some necessary article or other, accompanying someone sent from his home, etc., but fundamentally he devotes himself to his pasturing, the constant occupation of the Guajiro.

[97 cont.]
826 which we have referred on various occasions in this work.

Hunting charms. We could only acquire data about the
224 type of talismans connected with the hunting of deer and rabbits. The object of such a talisman is a double one; on one hand, it inculcates ability and quickness on the part of the hunter who possesses it; and on the other, it exercises a restraining action on the animal he wishes to kill, as [98] according to the native belief, it stops its flight and converts it into an easy prey for the hunter.

[824] The charm for facilitating the hunting of rabbits is made with bejuco leaves, a plant known in La Guajira by the name of átpana-pi (átpana = "rabbit"). The leaves of this plant, which are used for making the charm, are long and shaped like a cartridge, which gives them a great likeness to rabbit ears. Besides this, it serves as food for rabbits, which they like a great deal.

To make the charm, the hunter carefully collects the leaves, grinds them up, and with the resulting powder makes small pellets resembling rabbit excrement. One of these small balls is carefully tied with a thread and is placed in the middle of the tassel which adorns the hand guard they use when drawing the bow. The effect of the charm is directed against the rabbit, limiting its chance of flight and thus making it easier for the hunter to secure his prey.

The charm used in hunting deer is also made from a plant
[824] well known to the hunters. This plant, in form like the bejuco,
[192] has wide leaves which shine like a mirror. It abounds in the forest and requires no special cultivation. In La Guajira it is called supána-unú; (su = neuter; pana = "leaf," "liver"; unú = "tree," "pole"; wunú = "remedy"). It is prepared in a similar way to that for hunting the rabbit and, as in that case, it is carried on the person of the hunter in the shape of small pellets
[192] which are tied to the hand guard of his bow. Once finished it takes the name of sipi-iráma, (iráma = "deer"), and its object is to make the hunting of the deer easier by attracting it toward the hunter, who thus cannot fail in his shot. It also prevents the animal's flight, thus making it, as in the case of the rabbit, an easy prey.

[98 cont.]

224 237 It is very interesting at this point to emphasize the fact that these hunting charms, in both cases, take the shape of the excrement of the animal that is to be hunted. We cannot allow to pass unnoticed this constantly recurring presence of excrement in the matter of magic. Let us recall the fact which we have frequently mentioned that for certain umbilical illnesses in children they apply excrement; that to call up their protector spirits the shaman use talismans that are shaped like goat excrement; and young Guajiro women bury their hair underneath patches of cow dung in order that they may be bought for wives at a good price.

These phenomena make us think of a very important function of excrement in the Indians' belief in magic, a function that [99] we know about only in its external aspects, but its application does not surprise us even though its explanation still appears obscure.

773 One has to remember that the guano of birds, according to Guajiro myths, was what favored the spread of seeds and populated the country with nourishing and useful plants for man and beast. One of our informants recounted this part of the Creation in the following manner: "Then Mareiwa brought together all the zancalargas (wading birds), troupials, and doves in a flock. He pointed out the far distance and told them to go in search, and there they ate of the iwaráya (fruit of the cardon) and prickly pear. He ordered them to bring the fruit of the cherry trees, and Mareiwa made it rain throughout all La Guajira. Each dove went about spreading his droppings, and where these fell there sprang up all the plants which both the wayú (Indian) and their animals could eat. So were propogated the cardon and cherry trees, and the earth was sown...."

751 726 579 Charms for war. This charm has the virtue of giving its owner complete bodily immunity in the fights which frequently arise between the various family groups. For this reason, before getting ready for combat, when on the way and in fear of a surprise attack, or when he goes to present a claim for compensation payment in the case of the violent death of one of the members of his clan, the Indian will rub himself all over with

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neither was much help. Our route went in a zig-zag from water hole to water hole. I did not feel altogether sure that the Gaffer would find the mission station. From what I could understand of the interpreter's inadequate Spanish and floods of Guajiro, it seemed that when the old man made his trip to the Macuira Hills, there was not yet a mission station there. I knew that it was of relatively recent date. If we could only get to Macuira, we could ask our way to the monks, I felt sure of that. Otherwise we should have to try and find our way to the little harbour of Puerto Estrella on the east coast of the peninsula. To go there involved a detour, but there would certainly be a white person or at least a mestizo there, who would be able to show us the way to Amúruru.

It seemed to us that our baquiano not only wandered round in search of water holes, but also avoided certain ranchos. What, we wondered, was the position with his clan? Was it engaged in a feud just then? I knew little of clan quarrels and blood-feuds, then.

The Gaffer now began asking everyone we met the way to Macuira. It was obvious that he did not know where he was and that we had a bad guide. The Guajiro have a wonderful sense of direction. They find their way unerringly about their trackless cactus steppes, where every place looks alike. They know every depression in the ground, every eminence, and they all have names. Like the Arabs in the desert, they never forget a way they have once travelled, so it was obvious that the Gaffer had never before been where we were then, that he had simply gone astray. The Indians' ability to follow tracks is also amazing. They can see by the hoof prints when a strange horse has been in among a herd, and they can track down a strayed bullock, even if it has joined company with others. An Indian can see whether others belong to his clan or not from a long distance off, even when he does not know them personally. They have a clan mark tattooed, or sometimes painted on their thighs, it is true, but an Indian seems to know to which clan they belong, even when you cannot distinguish those marks through field glasses.

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They were of black earthenware ornamented with figures. The women were making maize gruel. There, close to the green valleys, they ought to have been able to get any vegetables or roots they liked, yet they clung to their diet of maize and goat's meat. They had obviously put the pots on because they expected the men, and sure enough a couple of naked horsemen came galloping up, so at one with their horses that they looked like centaurs. The Guajiro Indians can be born on a horse in the literal sense, if their mothers have to be on a journey at the time. They look well on horseback, and even the old men rode well. The younger men were muscular and well-made, and more pleasing to our eye than the women.

The men had been out enjoying themselves. They had been hunting and their clan mark was painted in blue on their thighs. They must have done that to amuse themselves before they left, for normally both men and women have their clan marks tattooed.

We asked the men what they had hunted with, for they carried neither bows nor firearms, and also what they had hunted, for they did not seem to have got anything. They laughed and explained that they had had no luck, and showed us slings of plaited bast. They had been out after doves or rabbits, but had seen nothing. (The Creoles call the animal in question a rabbit, but its Latin name is *Sylvilagus cumanicus*.) They showed us the short throwing clubs with which they hunted this and made some practice throws. They were expert at hitting the target with both club and sling, but only at distances of twenty to thirty yards.

A youth showed us a whistle that he said would unfailingly entice a deer if you blew it—provided there was a deer nearby, as he hastened to add. Judging by the expression on the women's faces he was no famous hunter. A couple of men also arrived and we were able to think of doing business. We had no difficulty in buying what we wanted, provided we paid well. Prices were our great difficulty, yet these men were less spoiled than elsewhere in the peninsula. The Guajiro not only trafficked with the

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importance. Thus, while the child is on the way, he must not hunt with firearms, but only with bow and arrow. If he goes on a journey of any length after the child has come into the world, he must lay his saddle-girth round the babe or put his foot on its chest before he leaves. If he forgets to do that one can lay a pair of his old sandals on its breast. 843 [324]

If the first-born dies, it is feared that the others will do the same. The baby is placed head down in an urn with a lid and buried beneath a certain kind of tree. The mother often has to undergo another period of confinement, it being thought that all the rules had not been observed during her real period of puberty, and that that had an unfavourable effect on childbirth. If all the instructions are not observed, there is danger that the other children will also die. 766 844

My wife came back and told us that the child was born and all had gone well. It was the third child. The woman had lain on her back on the ground with legs straddled, and they had strewn a thick layer of fine sand under her crotch, so that the babe should land softly. An aunt of the woman's helped her, and her husband was there and helped to lift her and hold her during the final pains. The mother was now to keep quiet for a few days and, above all, not expose herself to the sun. 844

The old man explained that the rich let their women rest for weeks after giving birth, living on maize gruel and light food, while poor mothers have to go out and work as usual straight away. The child has the breast in the evening when the mother goes to bed; at three in the morning when everyone gets up, and occasionally during the day. In the better families the child is weaned with the help of maize gruel and goat's milk and a female slave takes charge of it, the mother having so many other duties. There are even some who keep wet-nurses, he said. 846 [56] 853

Then more men appeared and a woman who sat behind my wife, just outside the circle. I distributed tobacco and conversation became lively. My wife was surprised that Indian babies were allowed to sit upright so early. She was told that at first the mother supports it with her hand, and 854

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milked the cows and then watched the herds, keeping a particular eye on the calves, kids and lambs, which a beast of prey might take. He also had to look out for two-legged thieves. He soon learned where pasture was best and most suitable. He could see to the cattle, knew what to do when they fell ill and how to break in horses. The older ones were expert at tracking animals that had strayed—they could do this at the age of ten. He would have made himself a bow and arrows almost as soon as he could walk and have practised with them. With these he shot edible lizards and small birds. He set snares for doves. He watched at the men's deer traps by night and he took part in the slaughter. During the rains he helped to weed his maternal uncle's plots and prepare them for sowing. If he belonged to a fisher family on the coast he had to take part in his father's trips out to sea and dive for pearls. When not otherwise occupied he made carrying-nets.

'Do you see those,' said the old man, pointing to some bottles and bowls of calabash rind lying on a roof drying in the sun. 'It is the young ones who make those. They scrape out the inside and then carve figures in the rind while it is fresh and soft. You want to buy them, you say? That's nothing to sell. The children will gladly give you them.'

The children brought us their calabashes. They had to explain what the figures signified and naturally I gave them things in exchange.

It goes without saying that both boys and girls often have to run errands and sometimes act as nursemaid. Little girls have to learn to fetch water and look after the fire. Then they are shown how to make maize gruel and they have to practise baking maize cakes. They soon get to know all the wild and cultivated plants used in the Indian household. Then they take part in the harvest, which is the women's affair.

In those families which own many head of cattle, the sons, once they return from staying with their uncles, are often left much to themselves, for their fathers have no time for them. Their fathers neglect their upbringing and never administer physical punishment, since they risk being called

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On two occasions I went out with some hunters who had hunting cóntras. Two had talismans for hares; these were small pellets fastened to the leather shield that protects the arm against the bow string. The pellets were shaped like rabbit's excrement and contained a herb the leaves of which resembled rabbit's ears and which the so-called rabbits were fond of! Another man had a deer cóntra prepared from a creeper. It resembled deer's droppings.

The hunters were quite convinced that the cóntra would give them good hunting, and that by its power their game would be unable to escape them. Thus those cóntra were doubly effective. On neither occasion, however, did we get anything, much to the consternation of the hunters. I think they assumed that my presence had prevented the charms working, and they were astounded when I bought them.

Of other talismans there was one intended to help its owner win races. This consisted of some rattling fruits to tie beside the horse's ear. There was a cóntra for warriors called *rania*, which gave its bearer courage and made him invulnerable. Another, which was very expensive, was said to give the possessor luck in business and gradually make him rich. Having become rich, he could then purchase the most expensive charm of all, that which would bring him respect and power. This latter was strictly personal: an outsider could be harmed by seeing it, especially a thief, and it was not effective except in the hands of its rightful owner. It was contained inside several small bags, one within the other, and what was inside the inmost one was known only to the piache who prepared it. In the talisman that brought wealth there were supposed to be links of gold, the power of which lay in the spells spoken over them. Similarly pearls and little figures made of coconut over which the wise women had spoken spells served as amulets. Amongst other things they protect the wearer against the evil eye, belief in which the Indians had evidently adopted from the Spanish–Moorish superstitions of their conquerors. You can find too the small carved hands that are so typically Moorish, and the most powerful means of averting the evil eye. Yet another is more in the negro style. The skulls of